

April 6, 2017

GN 17:3-9

Who are we in the grand scheme of things? We are not Abraham, with whom God made a great covenant and who had descendants as numerous as the stars. We are not someone who was privileged to know Jesus and could choose to either follow him or ridicule him. We were all born after Jesus lived, died, and rose from the dead to bring us eternal life. We have to choose to be followers of Jesus every day.

Abraham knew God personally. We know God through the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us that he is God (“before Abraham came to be, I AM”), that he knows the Father, and does the Father’s will. Most importantly, he tells us that if we keep his word, we will not die but will have eternal life. So it must be somewhat important to keep his word. What exactly does that mean, to keep the word of Jesus?

God established a covenant with Abraham in which the people were to maintain a relationship with God, worshipping him alone. Later, many rules were added to define for the people what it meant to live in a way that was pleasing to God. Jesus brings a New Covenant in which the law is still fulfilled (love God and love your neighbor), but which demands of us a commitment to loving that goes far beyond any rules.

Loving God as Jesus expects demands that we pray without ceasing and put our trust in God. Surely during this season we can work on this more. We can be more spiritual by making contact with the Lord at all times of the day, by trying to make our entire life into a prayer. And we can take time to pray and reflect on scripture, which also brings us closer to God and more able to hear him speaking in our lives.

Loving others as Jesus expects demands that our concern for others be as great as our concern for ourselves. Loving others is not restricted to family and friends and people we like but must include enemies and especially the poor, the oppressed, the infirm, those who need us in any way. Keeping the word of Jesus means that we open ourselves to the opportunities that come to us every day to be of service to others.

Although we are not people called to lead a great nation, each of us is known and loved individually by God and is expected to follow Jesus by keeping his word. Let us love God more fully by improving our prayer life and spirituality. Let us love others better by recognizing Christ in everyone we encounter, and by acting so as to minister to whatever needs they might have.

Reflection questions:

What can I do today to come closer to God and trust in him more?

What opportunities are coming my way today to be of service to others?

Reflection by Deacon Jim Caristi, St. Paul